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27 September 1984

The Honorable Romano L. Mazzoli
The Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Dear Congressman Mazzoli:

We should like to express our gratitude for your leadership in presenting the 12 September 1984 hearing on HR 5805-- legislation that would provide retirement benefits to the former spouses of CIA overseas officers who were excluded from such coverage by the 1982 law, PL 97-269. The proposed legislation, as you know, is very important to these very few American women--women who have long served their country, their families, and their agency. Your support and leadership mean that passage into law is possible-- hopefully during the 1985 Congressional session.

We are grateful, too, for your leadership role in the original legislative effort that has meant financial security not only for the CIA spouses divorced after the effective date of the 1982 law, 15 November 1982, but also for their children. Some of these women have written that they are in their own homes and hope to stay there. Several are working but say they will be able to retire financially secure--an option they would not have had--when the time comes to do so.

The other important provision of HR 5805--group health insurance--is addressed, at least partially, in HR 2300, which was passed on 24 September 1984. HR 2300 would provide to eligible former spouses of Federal employees the option of enrolling in a group health plan of the employing agency by paying the full premium costs. This Bill, through already legislated procedures, could provide the same option for CIA spouses receiving, or designated to receive, Federal annuities. The provision will be an important benefit for the CIA spouses divorced in the future, whose property settlements can be written so as to make them eligible. The vital need for affordable group health benefits has been well documented in surveys, letters, and interviews with CIA spouses.

Finally, may we say that we know we speak for all CIA wives, when we say thank you for your help with these legislative advances that reflect your continuing concern for the human side of the overseas intelligence mission.

Sincerely yours,

Barbara Colby

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